



Education Cannot Wait.

#ActNow!

A fact-finding study report on elementary education in Madhya Pradesh



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Massive learning loss among school children due to the Covid-19 pandemic

The education of more than 1.5 billion students worldwide has been hampered due to the global pandemic. State governments and the Union Government had started many initiatives to engage children with education. But, due to the lack of digital resources or access, many children needed help to avail of these benefits.

To make up for the loss of studies in these two years, Atmashakti Trust in collaboration with a Madhya Pradesh based NGO Holistic Action, Research and Development (HARD), conducted a fact-finding study, to understand how the state is faring in terms of providing opportunities for students to bridge their learning loss in a post-covid scenario. It was a part of a collaborative national education campaign titled, "Education Can't-Wait. #ActNow!"

Why the study was undertaken

- To know whether the education department has taken any initiatives toward the learning recovery program.
- To implement a refresher course for the Hindi-medium students of Class I – VII in Govt. Schools / Govt. aided schools
- To minimize the impact of lost learning among the students.
- To boost the confidence level of students for mainstreaming in the current academic session.
- To share the recommendations to the concerned regarding the bottlenecks and the addressing mechanisms for the education system

Coverage, process and methodology of the study

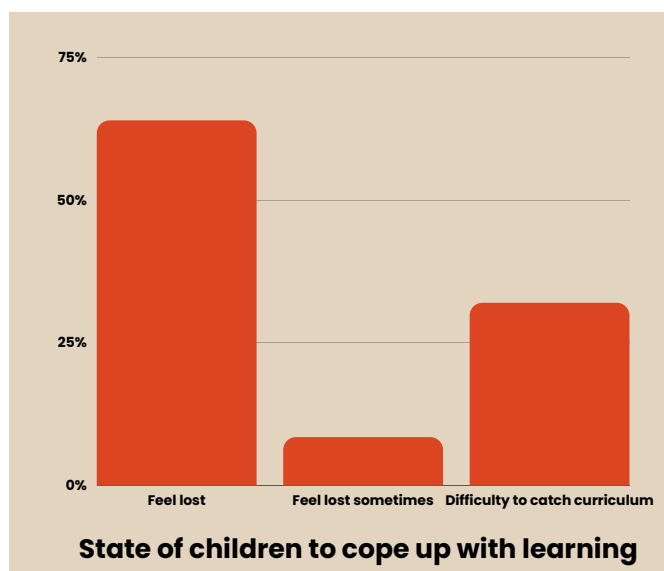
The fact finding study was conducted between November and December covering 350 villages of five districts in Madhya Pradesh, to capture efforts of the state government towards the recovery of learning loss due to school closure during the pandemic. However, this time, the study was not limited to LRP but also migration, dropouts, and school infrastructure, which contributes to the overall learning performance of children. The study collected data from 839 respondents on LRP, 478 respondents on RTE norms, 118 respondents on dropouts, and 110 on migration.

The fact-finding was conducted using online forms covering all the stakeholders who are part of the Learning Recovery Program & Right To Education, Dropout & Migration. The sampling was done in the selected areas among the students, parents, SMC, and other stakeholders involved in the process to understand the ground reality of the implementation through a self-administered fact-finding form.*

**Respondents: Students from Class III-IX, Parents, SMC members & Other Stakeholders*

Key findings

Learning recovery programme (LRP)



- The fact-finding report shows that 64%(537) of students feel lost in education, as they have lost their learning over the last two years, whereas 8.44% (55) of students sometimes feel lost. If students feel lost in their education, how long they can continue is a big question for all concerned.
- 32% of students said that they are facing difficulties in their current curriculum because they aren't able to link it with their previous year's curriculum

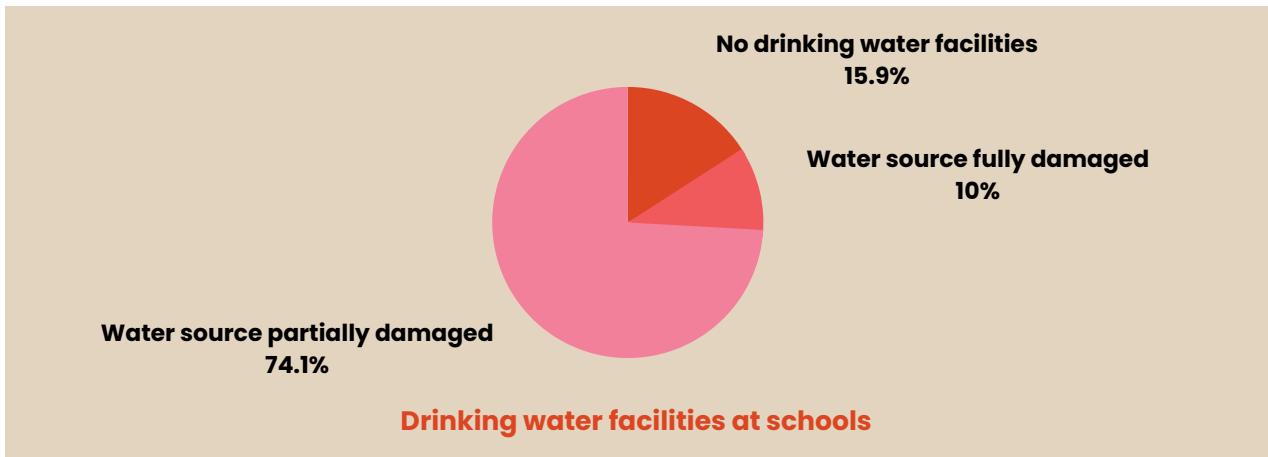
- The fact-finding report shows that 51.3%(430) of students feel completely lost in their current education, whereas 23.6% (198) of students feel lost sometimes. If students feel lost in their education, how long can they continue their education?
- The fact-finding reveals that even if the schools have opened in the last seven months, there was no student assessment conducted to know the students' learning outcomes as per their standards.
- The report revealed that Madhya Pradesh government has no LRP program in place, which will force children to be at the periphery of education. Therefore, it will be tough for the students to recover from the learning losses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Right to Education (RTE) Norms

The Right to Education Act lays down norms and standards relating to Pupil-Teacher-Ratios (number of children per teacher), classrooms, separate toilets for girls and boys, drinking water facilities, number of school working days, working hours of teachers, etc. Each and every elementary school (Primary school & Upper Primary School) in India has to comply with norms to maintain a minimum standard set by the Right to Education Act. Following are the study findings on the status of RTE norm compliance in the surveyed areas in Madhya Pradesh:

- The fact-finding Report revealed that 36%(172) of schools are short of 1 teacher compared to the number of sanctioned posts in their school. The lack of adequate school teachers enormously affects education in Madhya Pradesh. Similarly, 22% (105), 22.8%(38), & %(19) of schools are short of 2,3 and 4 teachers, respectively.
- Every school must have at least the same number of classrooms as the number of classes. Common classrooms for multiple classes impact the learning outcome on a large scale. The fact-finding Report uncloaks that 16.89%(62) of schools are short of 1 classroom compared to the number of classes in the school. Similarly, 29.97% (110) and 11.17%(41) of schools are short of 2,3,& 4 classrooms respectively.

- The Fact-finding report reveals that 5.4%(26) of schools don't have drinking water facilities. Where the government needs to take immediate action to resolve the issues may be through convergence with the allied departments.



- The fact-finding report unlocks that drinking water sources in 3.4%(16) of schools are fully damaged, whereas partially damaged in 25.2%(120) of schools. Firstly, schools lack Drinking water sources. Secondly, the existing sources are fully or partially damaged on many occasions. So the an exact need for quick action by the concerned department towards addressing issues.

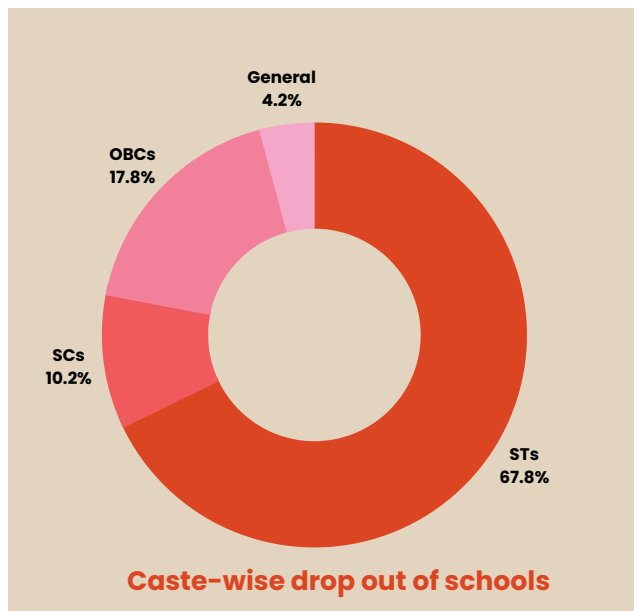


Dropout of children

The last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have been challenging for all of us, and children were the worst victim of it. The fear of getting infected and the lockdowns meant that educational institutions, including schools and colleges, remained shut for regular classes for the better of 2020 and 2021. Though classes switched to online mode, only a few portions of these children could get access to it. The reason was that neither they had a digital device to access online education nor the facility of internet connection in their areas which deprived them of learning in online mode.

As a fallout, many children dropped out of school since they remained out of education for a prolonged period. Following are the study findings on the dropout of children from school in the surveyed areas in Madhya Pradesh:

- The fact-finding report revealed that out of the total 118 dropout cases, 67.8% belong to ST, 10.2%, 17.8%, & 4.2% are from SC, OBC, and General categories respectively.
- The significant reasons for dropout found from the fact-finding are 40.7 said because they are engaged in household work, 6.7%, 26.3%, 10.2%, 4.2%, 11.2%, & 10.2% have told their dropout reasons Because of difficulties in the curriculum, other logic, Parents aren't interested, engaged in labor work, & either parent has migrated or not interested respectively.
- Teachers counseling for rejoining the school- The fact-finding report says that in the case of 62.7% of students, not any of the teachers came and asked them to go back to school, and the rest, 37.3% have shared that though the teachers have come to them and asked them to rejoin the school, they didn't.
- During fact-finding, it is also found that 40.7% of parents don't even try to send their children back to school. Moreover, there were no efforts from the SMC, said 68.6% of the respondents.
- According to the fact-finding report, 42.4% of the students had no opportunity to read, nor was there any scope for them to engage in reading activities because of different issues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

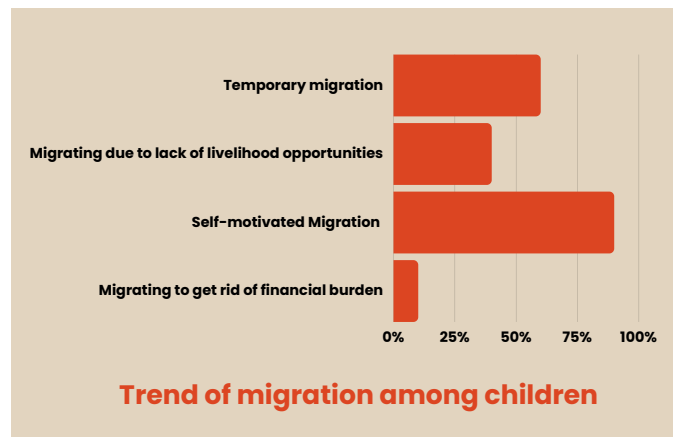


Migration and its impact on children's education

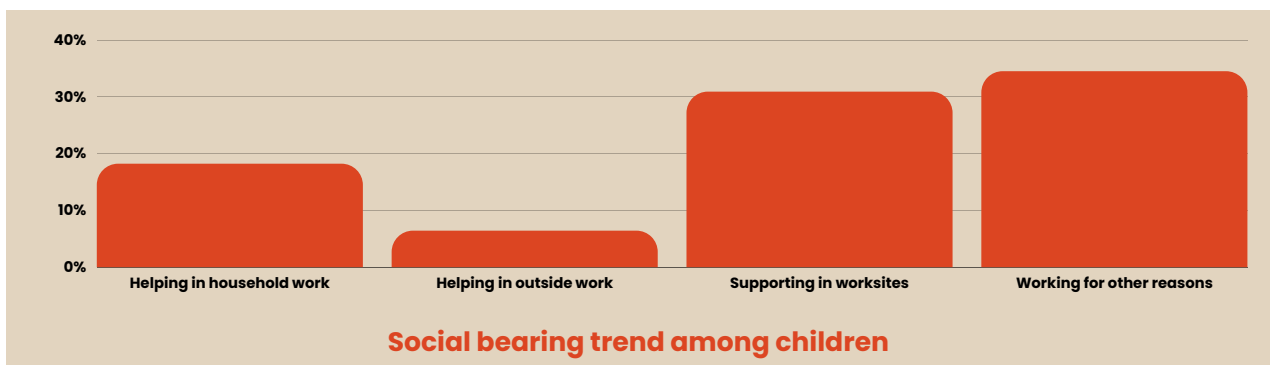
India's 2011 Census recorded 453 million internal migrants in India, forming a significant 37% of the total population. One in every five migrants is a child, resulting in an estimated 92.95 million migrant children.

Children whose parents migrate accompany them to work sites or stay back in the source village left behind without one or both parents. In addition, the generally fixed nature of the schooling system makes it difficult for children who accompany their parents to continue their education during their movement to and from work sites and stay therein. Following are the study findings on migration and its impact on children's education in the surveyed areas in Madhya Pradesh:

- Out of a total of 118 students who participated in the interview, 60% said they were temporarily migrating. 40% said they migrated out because of insufficient livelihood opportunities in the locality. In addition, 90% of the respondents said they willingly migrated out, whereas the other 10% said they migrated to repay the pending loan.



- Current engagement of the migrant students-18.2% have said they are helping their parents in the household work, 6.4%, 30.9% & 34.5% have said working outside, supporting their parents at the work site, and due to some other reasons, respectively.



- The fact-finding reveals that 31.8% of the parents take their children with them while migrating because no one is left in their homes to take care of their children. Similarly, 33.6%, and 33.6% said that they need their children's support at the worksite for more income and other reasons, respectively.

Recommendations

Taking into account the issues found during the survey, a series of discussions took place with teachers, parents, SMC members, PRIs, academicians, and local education administration to address the current situation. After discussion, some broad recommendations came up, which are mentioned below:

- Students found the LRP teaching materials interesting. The material should be distributed and made accessible to all students.
- The LRP learning materials could also be prepared in tribal or local languages wherever the Multilingual Education Scheme is implemented.
- A long-term approach is required to meet the gaps created. Therefore, LRP should continue until the students achieve the class-appropriate learning output.
- The state government should arrange a monitoring mechanism for LRP in the public domain for assessment from the general public.
- A visible transparency board in the school informing the compliance status of RTE norms shall be made on the premises.
- The infrastructural requirements, such as the appointment of teachers, proper classrooms, boundary, water, and separate toilets for boys and girls, different kitchens, playgrounds, etc., need to be fulfilled urgently as per the Right to Education norms. Additionally, there is a need for more benches & chairs for students in most schools. We recommend arranging some funds for the given reason too.
- The state government may conduct Social Audit to assess the implementation of RTE.
- The parents and school management committee should be proactively engaged in the Learning Recovery Plan. More sensitization is required for the parents on the immediate need for learning recovery.
- Teachers' training is crucial for the success of any program such as LRP.
- The student's assessment results and LRP, in particular, should be communicated to parents in time.
- Community awareness is required to resolve many issues, such as the engagement of students in household work.
- Only attending school will not help children to recover from their learning loss; hence students need to spend time on their studies during off-school hours. School teachers or volunteers can facilitate the classes during those hours for faster recovery.
- PRIs need to be sensitized to RTE norms and LRP. The government should ensure the participation of PRIs in LRP implementation and fulfilling the norms of RTE.
- A shortage of teachers hampers the quality of learning imparted in school. In many areas, only 1 or 2 sikhshak runs the school, and not a single teacher is appointed. Hence, the appointment of the teacher is a must to run any program effectively, such as LRP.
- Teachers are engaged in many non-teaching activities affecting the learning of students. Therefore, teachers should be only entrusted with teaching and engaging with the students.
- Lack of funds at the panchayat level results in the delay in completing infrastructure building/repairs of schools. Hence adequate funds should be with the Panchayats to meet the infrastructural requirement.



About Us

Atmashakti is a right-based catalyst organization that coalesces Tribal and Dalit people for their socio-economic and political empowerment. For over a decade's consistent focus on collectivizing the community, Atmashakti has facilitated the formation of more than 23 collectives in 17 districts and 84 blocks of Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. This is Atmashakti's first intervention in Madhya Pradesh with Holistic Action Research and Development (HARD). To learn more about us, please visit www.atmashaktitrust.com

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